UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/48
28 August 1997

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 6

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Letter dated 27 August 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to the Chairman of the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

I have the honour to enclose herewith the written statement by the Government of the Republic of Korea with regard to the resolution on contemporary forms of slavery (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/L.37), in particular, paragraph 53 concerning sexual slavery during the Second World War.

I request that the enclosed statement be circulated as an official document of the Sub-Commission. I also request that the written statement be included in the summary record and/or the final report of the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

(Signed): Joun Yung SUN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GE.97-13971 (E)

Statement by the representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea on draft resolution L.37

My Government first wishes to pay tribute to the distinguished members of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery for their devoted work and efforts aimed at, inter alia, resolving problems associated with sexual slavery during the Second World War, that is, the "comfort women" issue.

My Government has strong reservations to the expression "positive steps", contained in draft resolution L.37 in paragraph 53, because such an expression may sound misleading to the majority of the Korean victims.

Given that the Government of Japan, which holds the key to the resolution of this issue, has been insisting upon compensation for the victims solely through a private fund under the name of the Asian Women's Fund (AWF), disregarding the desire of the majority of the victims from Korea, which is by far the most affected country, the Korean Government cannot share the view that there have been "positive steps made so far towards the solution to this issue", if such steps imply compensation through the above-mentioned Asian Women's Fund.